

Abstract

A system and method are provided that allow meat logs to be manually loaded into a slicing station and thereafter be continuously automatically processed at the slicing station, a harping station, and an insertion station for automated packaging thereof without the need for handling of the meat stacks by workers. To this end, the slicing station is effective to form smaller sections or chubs from the meat logs and to do so such that the chubs are provided with substantially parallel flat end-faces to ensure that high quality meat slices are generated therefrom. The chubs are then transported to the harping station where each of the chubs undergoes a single cutting operation, thus simultaneously forming the meat slices therefrom and substantially maintaining the slices in the configuration of the chubs for generating well-formed stacks of the slices. Thereafter, the stacks are received at the insertion station where they are transferred to their packages, on an automated basis without the need for manual handling thereof. This is enabled due to the well-formed stacks generated by the harping station which allows the stacks to be dropped into the packages aligned therebelow.